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LIVING PICTURES

BY FRANCES M. BENSON.

Illustrated from photographs of footlight favorites.

"ART may err, but nature cannot miss," says Dryden, and the effort to prove his assertion is an experiment to which the various arts are industriously lending themselves for the moment; for while the drama is bending every energy toward artistic effect, fine art, so called, is moving heaven and earth for dramatic effect, and both are eager to sacrifice themselves and each other for realism.

One of the results, or rather caprices, of the present order of things is the "living picture," which, on the stage, is mainly a study of effect brought about by a startling arrangement of light and color, vivid without being glaring. The living picture has the advantage of being an obvious reality, and it has the further advantage of radiance of flesh tints unpaintable, and the knowledge that the flesh tints are real, which goes a great way with the spectators.

Whatever the living picture may leave to be artistically desired is supplied by the charm of personality in having a woman of well-known graces to pose as a direct interpreter of the artist's idea. The picture is no longer an ideal: it is a familiar presence. Miss Eleanor Barry, in the rôle of one of Tojetti's simple maidens, is quite as interesting as when she appears as Shakespeare's *Juliet* or



From photographs of Miss Eleanor Barry and the painting by Virgilio Tojetti.

Ophelia, and her years of character study enable her to handle "The Embarrassing Question" quite as intelligently. Perhaps it is due to those years of insight that the question seems to her more of a serious than of an embarrassing nature. Her expression is that of suddenly awakened responsibility rather than the girlish confusion contemplated by the stalwart youth before Miss Barry was so cleverly photographed into the original young lady's place. However, the nineteenth-century girl would be apt to take a practical rather than an embarrassed view of the situation, even if she were to be actually transported into the surroundings of a remote century in time to have personal inquiries made of her under the rose.

Miss Katharine Florence, in spite of her loosely attired wooer, is quite on her native heath in "Wooing." The artless shepherdess is not more at home under the blue skies and in the open air than was the



From photographs of Miss Katharine Florence and the painting by F. Andreotti.
WOOLING.



From photographs of Miss Effie Shannon and the painting by C. von Baudenhausen.
LISTENING TO THE FAIRIES.

"Faun Afraid" of her painstaking creation, and, though widely different in spirit, evidence an appreciative conception. Graceful, Miss Florence always is, and with an artist's instinct.

Miss Shannon, in "Listening to the Fairies," has only to be her own ingenuous, sweetly womanly self to hear pleasant words of herself. Both nature and art have contributed to her successes in stage pictures before now; the long training at the Lyceum would necessarily wipe out all artistic heresies from her sins of commission. The original picture is well known, with its big-eyed, baby-faced ideal, with a figure grown to woman's stature. In the living picture, however, the type is that of a girl whose comprehension has kept pace with

her physical development, and the whisperings of the winds, the reeds, and the night birds fall on understanding ears. The face is not so idealic, perhaps, but neither is it insipid, and the proportions of the picture are well sustained. In "Mignon" the setting is modern enough to save the most sensitive from qualms of conscience over the substituting of the real for the ideal, and the effect certainly justifies the substitution.

"The Dancing Lesson" finds Miss Barry still in the realms of the purely imaginary, and with the contemplative expression still upon her face. She extends a helping hand—and a prettily curved one it is—to Cupid's capers; but that there are thorns hidden in the roses he is dancing among, she is fully aware,



*From photographs of Miss Eleanor Barry
and the painting by Virgilio Tojetti.*

THE DANCING LESSON.

and she is on guard accordingly. He is a pretty child of idealism; she is a pleasing type of realism, and the two have been brought together by the conjunction of fine art and scientific art for the edification of investigators. The motive is not far behind, but the final result is perhaps farther away.

It is characteristic of this prosy, workaday world that it should desire its ideals made somehow real—brought closer, almost within touch. Sentiment may embody itself in ostensible fact and time-hallowed precepts adapt themselves to later-day examples without undue clashing with the eternal fitness of things. Please the passing glance, and a favorable impression is assured.

Is it the low ebb of imagination or the full tide of realism? Opinions are divided.



*From photographs of Miss Effie Shannon
and the painting by P. Wagner.*

MIGNON.